

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION TOPICS

Most often, LifeRing meetings come to life with cross-talk stimulated by members' check-ins. But sometimes discussion lags and the convenor tries to enliven things by raising a topic. Often, the convenor, or a member of the group, can come up with something easily; at other times a convenor can be left groping for ideas. A group of LifeRing convenors were asked for ideas for topics and came up with some suggestions:

— As I get new people in I generally will find a point after a person has talked to let everyone know that the best resource they have is the group. As many people are repeat attendees, they have personal knowledge of things like filing for disability, leave of absence, and dealing with work/ bureaucracy. Also which meetings they recommend when signatures are an issue, and how well they like them. Another topic I like is how people can distract themselves from triggers or urges with hobbies, walks or hiking, going to the gym, and so forth.

— I have often tried to get people to talk about stuff they used to like to do (reading, music, exercise, etc.) or have always wanted to do that they might start thinking about resuming in early recovery.

— How about asking “What does sobriety look like to you?” or “What does living sober mean to you?” Trying to get them to think past the image of just missing being able to drink, and to expand on how to fully embrace their sober selves. Or “How has your relationship to alcohol (or other substance) changed?”

— Every so often one of us at my meeting will bring a quote or sentence or poem or something we've read recently that's spoken to us about recovery — generally speaking it's not DIRECTLY about recovery, but something like Mary Oliver's “Wild Geese” poem as a conversation starter. If I bring something like that, I'll usually share some vignette about “and this is how I tie this idea to my recovery.”

— My group doesn't really respond well to topics a lot of the time. If we have time left after check -ins, we have started watching a couple of minutes of a LifeRing video and then talking about it. People are responding really well to it. Right now we're on Marty's talk about the “Medical Model of Addiction”. We may only watch 10 minutes and talk about it for 5.

— A member brought up a topic that really impressed him from a San Francisco Kaiser IOP LifeRing meeting. The convenor asked, “How has your sobriety allowed you to be of service to others?”

— We spoke tonight about the little evidences and great rewards in regaining the trust of family/friends.

— You could ask the group for ideas.

— I'll bet you can get ideas from the workbook just take some fill in the blank completion item and throw it out there.

— Triggers — Get folks to share examples of triggers. Self medication – Get folks to talk about their perceived benefits from drinking and why it doesn't work. Costs – Get folks to talk about the money they spend to maintain their addiction; the things they do to hide it. Tools – What have folks tried before to break their addiction

— Domains – Take a look at “Recovery by Choice” ... some great ideas there.

— Is there a clean and sober place inside of me, and if so, what does it look like? A clean and sober dream or vision I have for my life. A clean and sober memory that I have. A good time that I have spent with clean and sober friends. People I know who love me as a clean and sober person.

— What recovery tools have you found most helpful?

— How to recognize cravings and urges, and what can we do when we have one?”

— How can we recognize when we seem to be in relapse mode?

— Are there times when you feel your “addict self” waking up? What are they and what do you do?

— We had a discussion once about “recovery triggers” – things that remind you of recovery (as opposed to triggers to use). We have two people who always wear the LR orange wristband which is what made me think about the topic.